

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJ: MEDIA REACT PANAMA CANAL TREATY

1. MEDIA REACT ON CANAL TREATY SEPT 3-6

EXTENSIVE, STEADY CABLEPLAY GIVEN BY ALL 4 MAJOR DAILIES TO PREPARATIONS FOR TREATY CEREMONIES AND ARRIVAL IN DC OF HEADS OF STATE. SEPT 3 GOVERNMENT SPOKESPAPER EXCELSIOR FRONT-PAGES PRESIDENT ODUBER'S AND FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO'S REITERATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR TREATIES (TEXT FILED SEPARATE USINFO). USIS BACKGROUNDERS AND FACT SHEETS GIVEN FULL-PAGE TREATMENT SEPT 4 EXCELSIOR COLOR SUPPLEMENT AND SEPT 5 LA REPUBLICA. TV NEWSCASTS ALSO DREW ON USIS RELEASES. SEPT 5 LA NACION CONTINUED ITS EDITORIAL STRAIN OF TEMPERED OPTIMISM AND SUPPORT FOR THE TREATIES IN BRIEF COMMENTARY (SPANISH TEXT FILED SEPARATE USINFO): "IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT CARTER'S INVITATION TO LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS WAS MADE IN ORDER TO GET BOTH PUBLICITY AND PRESSURE...INDUCING THE SENATORS TO VOTE THINKING OF THE WORLDWIDE IMPORTANCE OF THE TREATY RATHER THAN PAROCHIAL INTERESTS. IF SO, WELL AND GOOD."

SEPT 6 POST-PRODUCED PACKAGE ROUNDUP OF VOA INTERVIEWS WITH
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VISITING LATIN LEADERS WAS DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL RADIO STATIONS.

2. MEDIA REACT SEPT 7

TREATY SIGNING RECEIVED BANNER HEADLINE PLAY ALL THRU MORNING DAILIES, EACH DEVOTING FULL INSIDE-PAGE TO WIRE SERVICE COMPILATIONS. IN ADDITION, INDEPENDENT CIRCULATION LEADER LA NACION

CARRIED THREE-PAGE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ON CANAL, BUILT AROUND USIS RELEASES. SUPPLEMENT INCLUDES QUOTES FROM LEADING CR POLITICAL FIGURES; EXCERPTS FOLLOWING DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT FOR TREATIES AND CARTER ADMINISTRATION UNANIMOUS, CROSSING ALL PARTY LINES: (FULL TEXT OF QUOTES BEING SENT UNDER SEPARATE USINFO):

PRESIDENT ODUBER: "THE NEW CANAL TREATY WILL CONSIDERABLY BENEFIT COSTA RICA; ITS SIGNING DEMONSTRATES HOW THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN AMERICAN STATES CAN BE RESOLVED BY LEGAL MEANS." ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, COSTA RICAN SHIPS WILL NOT HAVE TO PAY TOLLS WHEN PANAMA ASSUME SOVEREIGNTY..."UNDER THESE CONDITIONS A GREATER EXPANSION OF THE COSTA RICAN ECONOMY WILL BE POSSIBLE".

FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO: "THE NEW CANAL TREATY IS A MASTER WORK OF JUSTICE....I CONSIDER IT A MAGNIFICENT TREATY, THE BEST THAT COULD BE FOUND WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTERESTS OF THE US AND PANAMA". FACIO ADDED THAT HE WAS SURE THE US SENATE WOULD APPROVE THE DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THEM, "THE GROUP OPPOSED TO THEIR RATIFICATION GROWS SMALLER EVERY DAY."

UNIDAD (OPPOSITION) PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE RODRIGO CARAZO: "IN LIGHT OF THE HARMONY WITH WHICH IT WAS ACHIEVED, THE NEW TREATY IS A MAGNIFICENT DEMONSTRATION OF THE RELATIONS OF THE US WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE US, IT IS A RECOGNITION OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PANAMA. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF PANAMA, IT IS A STRENGTHENING OF UNCLASSIFIED

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ITS SOVEREIGNTY. I BELIEVE THAT THE APPROVAL OF THE US SENATE WILL DEPEND UPON THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONCEPTS I HAVE JUST EXPRESSED. PRESIDENT CARTER IS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE SO THAT THE NEW TREATY MAY BE APPROVED."

INCUMBENT PARTY (PLN) PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LUIS ALBERTO MONGE: "WE TRUST THAT THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE WILL UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE NEW CANAL TREATY. ITS TERMS ESTABLISH A CHRONOLOGY BY WHICH THE ELEMENTS OF INJUSTICE AND COLONIALISM WILL FINALLY BE CANCELLED" ... "PRESIDENT CARTER'S ROLE REFLECTS HIS FIRM DECISION TO ESTABLISH CLEAR AND EQUITABLE RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA. POLITICAL RISKS ARE BEING TAKEN, AND THE PEOPLE OF LATIN AMERICA HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO DEMONSTRATE OUR SOLIDARITY AND HOPE TO HIM". MONGE, REFERRING TO PRESIDENT ODUBER'S ROLE IN REACHING A TREATY, SAID "I BELIEVE THAT THE CONTRIBUTION OF ODUBER REFLECTS THE WILL OF AN IMMENSE MAJORITY OF THE COSTA RICAN PEOPLE."

UNIFICATION NATIONAL (OPPOSITION) PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE VILLALOBOS ARCE: "THE SIGNING OF A NEW TREATY REPRESENTS NOT ONLY A TRIUMPH FOR PANAMA, BUT FOR ALL OF LATIN AMERICA. IT IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW PROBLEMS CAN BE DIMINISHED IN A CIVILIZED MANNER AND WITH RESPECT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ALL COUNTRIES INVOLVED(2)".

SEPT 7 EXCELSIOR REPUBLISHED EFE ANALYSIS DATED MADRID SEPT 6 AS LEAD EDITORIAL. NOTING CHANGES OVER LAST TEN YEARS IN LATAM POLITICAL SCENE DISPATCH STATED: "IT ISN'T STRANGE THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, THE FIRST US ADMINISTRATION TO GIVE SOMETHING IN RETURN FOR ALL THAT IS HAS RECEIVED FROM LATIN AMERICA, HAS SUCCEEDED IN GETTING THE MILITARY GOVERNMENTS OF THE CONTINENT TO PROMISE A RETURN TO POLITICAL DIALOG AND DEMOCRACY". EXCELSIOR ALSO RAN JOSEPH HARSCH EDITORIAL: "IF THE TREATIES ARE DEFEATED, THE FIRST TO BENEFIT WILL BE THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF LATIN AMERICA."

3. COVERAGE OF TREATY CEREMONIES: ALL 4 TELEVISION STATIONS AND MAJOR RADIO STATIONS STANDING BY TO BROADCAST LIVE.

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